GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3247
ANSWERED ON:12.05.2006
LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO POOR PEOPLE
Manvendra Singh Shri

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons to whom free legal aid has been provided during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) the details of existing income limit fixed by the Government for providing legal assistance to the poor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to increase the income limit for free legal assistance;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to be increased?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ)

(a) :The requisite information is being collected from ail State Legal Services Authorities in the country. The information will be laid on the Table of the House as and when the same is received.

(b) : Limitation as to the income does not apply in the case of persons belonging to weaker sections, such as, a member of scheduled caste or scheduled tribe, a victim of trafficking in human beings or begar as referred to in Article 23 of the Constitution, a woman or a child, a mentally ill or otherwise disabled person, an industrial workman etc . As regards other persons, initially every person whose annual income was not exceeding Rs.9,000/- had been eligible for free legal aid in cases coming before High Courts and Courts subordinate thereto. In cases before the Supreme Court, the limit was fixed at Rs.12,000/-. At the fourth Annual Meet of the State Legal Services Authorities held under the aegis of the NALSA on 29th February 2004 and 1st March 2004 at Kolkata, it was resolved to raise the income ceiling in terms of section 12(h) of the said Act, from Rs.25,000/- to Rs. 50,000/- per annum in respect of cases before High Courts and Courts subordinate thereto. The income ceiling limit has been raised by the Central Government to Rs.50,000/- in respect of cases before the Supreme Court.

(c), (d) & (e): No such proposal as of now.